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# ***LEGISLATION AND POLICY***

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## **Cooperative Hemispheric Security Architecture for the 21st Century**

**By**

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The dangers of the Cold War have faded. And, new and prominent threats in the hemisphere have emerged, requiring coordinated, cooperative, and multilateral responses. Recognizing that the international and regional system has changed substantially in the past decade, it is important to redefine the collective goals of our nations in the hemisphere.

The *Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance* (“Rio Treaty”) sets a standard whereby nations would respond in their common defense, with the ultimate goal of creating a more secure environment. Our experience since September 11<sup>th</sup> in mobilizing hemispheric support and responses to fight terrorism under the Organization of American States (OAS) Charter and “Rio Treaty” proves that the current hemispheric security structure can address the region’s security needs quite well. It also demonstrated the flexibility of our security architecture to address the new and emerging threats we face.

Yet, a genuinely stable and secure environment cannot be created by solving our national defense problems alone. For example, we recognize that threats to our security can stem from conflicts within states as well as from conflicts between states. As new threats and security challenges have evolved and emerged, the states of the Americas have stepped up to meet them.

Since 1995, the OAS has built an impressive record of achievement. Over ninety resolutions on regional arms control, demining, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) and other aspects of defense and security policy have been adopted by consensus. In addition, three conventions concerning illicit trafficking in firearms, transparency, and terrorism have also been adopted. By actions and deeds, not mere words, this body of work defines our hemispheric security, as we know it today.

The OAS has served as the catalyst for hemispheric cooperation and a broader “inter-American system of hemispheric security,” which now includes the Pan American Health Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, the Inter-American Defense Board, and meetings such as the Defense Ministerial of the Americas and Conferences of the American Armed Forces. Because today’s security concerns have broadened to encompass far more than just internal and external military conflicts, the region has taken specific steps to address these threats.

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In the war against terrorism, the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) was established in October 1999 to coordinate member states activities against terrorism, including special training and facilitating exchanges of information. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have awakened hemispheric concerns and, more importantly, drove hemispheric actions to address terrorism in a comprehensive manner. In January, CICTE identified urgent actions aimed at strengthening inter-American cooperation to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism in the Hemisphere. Moreover, the OAS adopted at the General Assembly in Barbados an *Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism* that expands our legal obligations to work together to both prevent and respond to terrorism. Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism's activities, in conjunction with the invocation of the Rio Treaty, constitute a strong institutional base for the hemispheric fight against terrorism.

In the fight against illegal narcotics, OAS member states have developed a drug abuse control program (CICAD) launched in 1987 which has developed model legislation and fostered cooperation across the broad range of narcotics issues. In 1996, the OAS negotiated the Anti-Drug Strategy for the Hemisphere, providing the policy context for the multilateral evaluation mechanism. In the effort to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, the OAS created the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction to mitigate or prevent the effects of natural calamities that befall the Americas. This mechanism will assist in identifying and preventing problems dealing with preparedness. It will also take hemispheric action to respond to natural disasters.

In the campaign to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, the OAS has worked to support democratic institutions and governments, developing election observation missions and assisting member states in political reconciliation. In 1997, the Washington Protocol took effect, amending the OAS Charter to permit, as a last resort, the suspension of a member state whose democratically constituted government is overthrown by force. Last September, the OAS further strengthened democracy by the historic adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which commits us to defend and promote democracy through preventive measures to head-off ruptures in the democratic or constitutional order.

Finally, economic development and prosperity are important underpinnings of democracy and security in the region. The OAS has a broad mandate to address the economic and social agenda of fundamental importance to our societies. A great challenge facing the world today is how to raise the living standards of the world's poor and integrate them into the global economic system. The Summit of the Americas has identified this challenge and our governments have concluded that the primary engines for economic advancement are trade, foreign investment, and a healthy private sector. We can all agree that our security depends on the pillars of democracy, prosperity and the ability to bolster peace and security. With this as an objective, let me suggest steps in that direction.

First, we must seek to define the current threats and sources of insecurity, take stock of existing tools for dealing with them and consider any additional methods and measures required. There is considerable temptation to define "security" to include virtually any source of discomfort or inconvenience in our world. Some at the OAS have even raised "trade disputes" as an example of a threat to hemispheric security. While it is true that we should consider the impact of extreme poverty and even internal stability on our common security, we should take care not to settle for an overly broad, unfocused, definition that renders the term "security" meaningless and renders our hemispheric security agenda unattainable.

For that reason many issues, such as development, public health, the environment, and social concerns are being handled within the appropriate summit and OAS architectures rather than within the Inter-American system related to hemispheric security. We must continue to support

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existing mechanisms and institutions, and reaffirm the essential purposes of our hemispheric security architecture. The region must be ready to deter and to defend against any threat of aggression towards another nation. Yet, due to the existence of other destabilizing factors, the hemisphere must also promote wide-ranging partnership, cooperation, and dialogue with one another, with the ultimate aim of increasing transparency, mutual confidence, and the capacity for coordinated action.

We must stand ready to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations. Our security architecture must identify early potential sources of conflict and take measures to address them. The Inter-American conflict prevention and resolution capabilities must be strengthened by adoption of appropriate mechanisms, measures and tools for early warning, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the prevention of conflict. This applies to conflicts within states, as well as those between states. Our security architecture must have a more formal structure and process conducive to the development, implementation, and consideration of new confidence-building and security-building measures. Our security architecture must recognize the important contributions of sub-regional arrangements, agreements and measures that foster hemispheric security. For example, the *Regional Security System (RSS) of the Caribbean* and the *Framework Treaty on Democratic Security* in Central America both play an important role in defining our present and future security architecture. The Special Conference on Security also should recognize that the OAS must have the educational, technical and advisory expertise on defense and security issues that it needs to better serve its member states. The product of this review must be a structure that all States find relevant to their security concerns and in which they can enthusiastically participate. One year ago yesterday, the invocation of the Rio Treaty demonstrated the ability of the existing Western Hemispheric security architecture to respond to the challenge of September 11, 2001, and the specter of international terrorism. Facing the new and dynamic environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is incumbent upon the States of the Western Hemisphere to seize the unique opportunity to design a cooperative hemispheric security architecture for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. I know we will succeed.